

**SR 20 Sharpe's Corner to SR 536
Technical Advisory Committee
MEETING #2 NOTES**

**November 29, 2001, 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
Skagit PUD, Aqua Room**

Prepared By Tod McBryan

Attendance

TAC Committee

Stoney Bird, Citizen
Gary Christensen, Skagit County
Roy Daniel, Island Transit
Norman Dahlstedt, Dahlstedt Family Properties
Ann Marie Gutwein, Skagit County
Kirk Johnson, Skagit County
Ian Munce, City of Anacortes

Mike Morton, Sub Island-RTPO
Jennifer Quan, USFW
Ann Robinson, USACE
Andy Swayne, Puget Sound Energy
Tim Walters, Equilon Puget Sound Refining Co.
Dick Wilson, Port of Skagit County

Project Management Team

Sharon Feldman, CH2M Hill
Todd Harrison, WSDOT
Elizabeth Healey, FHWA

Guests

Tod McBryan, Heffron Transportation
Randy Simonsen, WSDOT
Marsha Tolon, WSDOT

Policy Board Members

H. Dean Maxwell, City of Anacortes
Don Munks, Skagit County Commissioner

Materials sent out to the Committee before the meeting included:

1. *Meeting Agenda*
2. *10-18-01 TAC Meeting Minutes*
3. *TAC Framework and Meeting Schedule 2001/2002*
4. *Draft PMT SR-20 Alternatives Description*
5. *SR-20 No Action Alternative Description*
6. *Draft PMT SR 20 Alternatives and No Action Vicinity Maps*
7. *SR 20 Illustrations of Conceptual Channelization*

Should any member that was not at the meeting wish to obtain any of these materials please contact Marsha Tolon, (tolonm@wsdot.wa.gov).

1. Introduction & Meeting Objectives

Marsha Tolon began the meeting at 9:09 am. She welcomed the group with thanks for attending. Introductions were made—all present introduced themselves. Marsha described the handouts available and those, which were different or revised since the e-mail distribution. She noted the upcoming meeting schedule and outlined today's meeting agenda. Marsha explained that the objective of the meeting is to review the alternative concepts, which have been consolidated by the PMT for screening.

2. Overview of Former Steering Committee Sub-Group Alternative Concepts
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Marsha explained how the current list of alternative concepts were developed from work performed by the SR-20 Steering Committee Sub-Group. She briefly outlined that group's mission, process, and results. The results included eight initial concepts, which were later condensed to six concept alternatives. Some of the concepts

such as the high-speed corridor and boulevard contain three sub-options, which provided further detail on elements such as HOV lanes or traffic control variations.

3. Refined Alternative Concepts

Todd Harrison explained how the alternative concepts developed by the sub-group were further consolidated into the current list of alternatives for further refinements and screening. He described how some of the alternatives had elements that were redundant with other alternatives or that did not alone meet the purpose and need for the safety improvement (such as TDM/TSM and Transit concepts). Some of the concepts had elements that were not under the control of the WSDOT and were removed for the purposes of this project review. Therefore, the concepts developed by the sub-group were condensed to represent the five unique options that address the overall intent of the sub-group and still meet purpose and need. Elements, such as spacing of interchanges and other operational issues associated with each, are to be reviewed in the screening process. He reiterated that a primary objective of today's meeting is to obtain feedback and comments from the TAC on the current list of alternatives.

Sharon Feldman began to describe each of the alternatives and their elements. She began by explaining that many of the TDM/TSM, Transit /HOV, and pedestrian/bicycle elements have been incorporated into all of the action alternatives. She also explained that the undivided arterial concept was eliminated since it was the experience of the WSDOT that this configuration would not improve safety (it actually would likely degrade safety conditions) and would not meet the purpose and need.

Sharon outlined the elements included in the No Action Alternative and explained that they were keyed to a map included with the handouts.

Sharon described the element of the High-Speed Throughway Corridor—with grade-separated interchanges. The group reviewed the improvements suggested for each existing intersection.

Dick Wilson asked about access to Fidalgo Bay Road and whether closure is necessary or whether a route around the back of the hotel would be a possible solution.

The group, led by Todd and Sharon, discussed that no final decisions were made on any concept element (such as road closures). Rather these items are included in the alternatives to ensure that further design efforts and screening address the potential problems.

Ian Munce added that it might be possible that closure is the best solution at that location to meet the purpose and need of improving safety.

Stoney Bird asked if the pedestrian/bicycle improvements suggested at Farm-to-market road were intended to be different than other locations.

Sharon explained that the elements remaining in the alternative concepts were still a result of sub-group recommendations and is not sure why some locations were treated differently than others. However, as further design and screening occurs these inconsistencies will be removed.

Gary Christensen noted that the concept for LaConner-Whitney Road might be perceived as a major impact to commercial properties on the south side of SR-20 (Farmhouse Inn and Texaco) since westbound traffic would require a noticeable diversion to access the site. He also questioned the potential impacts to industrial development with planned access to Bay View Road. Consider access management near the industrial area east of the Bayview-Edison Rd. After further review, his concern was reduced somewhat since the planned industrial development would be located farther east.

Norm Dahlstedt suggested that old county right-of-way might be useful in some of these alternatives (e.g. for Bayview-Edison Rd).

Mike Morton asked when each of these concepts will be ranked according to highest need or priority.

Sharon and Todd explained that screening of the overall alternatives would occur first. After a preferred alternative is identified and the state begins to seek funding, the elements and individual improvements would be prioritized.

Norm asked about the safety improvements that have been planned for some time now (such as new signals in

the corridor). He wondered if those improvements would be on hold pending our work on this project.

Todd explained that those improvements are going to proceed regardless of our timing on this process.

Norm recommended that all new grade separations include at least 16 to 17 foot height clearances for large trucks and oversize loads.

Mike suggested that the Texas "T" concept for the Sharpe's Corner intersection may not solve operational issues for left-turns to the south. Long queues and delay may still occur.

Sharon described the improvement concept for Reservation Road.

Dick suggested that grade separated clearances include adequate heights.

Norm indicated that some businesses had discussed the possibility of reopening the railroad spur that once passed under SR-20 (bridge at MP 49.85). The concept might consider increasing the height clearance to allow this in the future.

The group commented that the connection road for the new underpass at this location should be Padilla Height Road.

Sharon presented the concept for Thompson Road.

The larger group discussed the issues associated with industrial property traffic such as trucks from the refineries (carrying fuel, lubricants, and asphalt) requiring access to SR-20 eastbound at March Point Road. If this intersection is to be closed, the project must consider the impacts of truck traffic to other county roadways and impacts to other industrial traffic at Thompson Road north of SR-20. Issues include: as the ten-ton bridge on the access route to the refinery will need to be improved, commercial properties (retail) and residential properties could be severely impacted by such as rerouting. Suggested improvement to frontage road south of Thompson Rd. will need to occur if the overpass scenario takes place.

Todd explained another possible consideration—the WSDOT's preferred interchange spacing that could make multiple interchanges in the space between the Berentson Bridge and Sharpe's Corner less desirable.

The group broke into several discussions about issues in this area.

Break 10:10 to 10:25 A.M.

After reconvening, Sharon described the remaining high-speed corridor concepts.

Stoney suggested that transit pullouts be included in these concepts consistent with other concepts.

Sharon described the low-speed boulevard concept.

Ian asked what the speed of traffic would be under this concept and also asked if the WSDOT would look at these options as possible being implemented differently over time. For example, if high-speed boulevard makes the most sense from a safety, operational, and funding perspective now, but other major improvements become preferred in the future. (This would phase and prioritize improvements to establish some elements of the Boulevard scenario interim to longer-range projects.)

Todd explained that the idea is to address the safety of the corridor as soon as possible and consider the long-term needs of the corridor. The speed could be 40 to 50 mph under this alternative and the narrowing of lanes is intended to provide a more calm driving experience and slow traffic. Todd agreed that the concept descriptions need to clarify the intended speed.

Ian suggested investment of state, county, and local development monies for adjacent traffic solutions in association with the SR 20 changes.

Several group members commented that narrowing of lanes is not, in their opinion, going to improve safety in the corridor. They do not feel that drivers will ever slow down in this corridor. Furthermore, the narrower lanes would not be supportive of truck traffic clearly important to area.

Sharon explained Concept 3B – High-Speed Boulevard.

Stoney asked for the expected speed on this concept (answer: similar to today, 50 mph), and noted that is not too different than the low-speed other boulevard concept.

Todd again stated that the speed for each alternative needs to be clarified.

Dick suggested that with the low-speed option, turning movements and operations at Sharpe's Corner would need further improvements such as additional left-turn lanes and/or widening. The group agreed.

Sharon noted the end of the presentation of alternatives and asked if there were any other questions or comments.

Dick noted that the group had interpreted the plans for pedestrian/bicycle path as occurring in a separate right-of-way and asked for clarifying wording.

Sharon stated that the intent was to provide a separate path but within the large SR-20 right-of-way. The wording will be clarified.

Gary suggested that the revised wording consider the connection to other pedestrian and bicycle facilities (on County or City roads) not just from SR-536 to Sharpe's Corner.

Todd stated that he believes the overall concepts for pedestrian and bicycle improvements are consistent with the County and City plans for facilities in the area and that these plans will continue to consider those plans.

Mike and Dick both indicated that this type of pedestrian/bicycle facility is exactly what is needed based on positive experience with similar facilities in Island County and with Port projects.

A comment was listed that design at the Best Rd intersections needs development.

Marsha closed the meeting and explained following next steps for the PMT and some members of the TAC.

1. Further develop concepts
2. Meet to discuss refinery traffic and industrial property impacts
3. Prepare traffic forecasts
4. Perform screening

4. Next meetings agenda

Preliminary screening results review/comment

5. Next meeting location

Thursday, February 21, 2002. Skagit PUD, Aqua Room 9:00 am to Noon.